United Nations A/C.2/52/SR.43

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

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Second Committee

Summary record of the 43rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 November 1997, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council *(continued)*

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation *(continued)*

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Agenda item 100: Training and research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research *(continued)*

Other matters

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97-82916 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council *(continued)*

Draft resolution on the report of the Committee on Development Planning (A/C.2/52/L.28)

1. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.28 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, proposed that the fourth preambular paragraph should be replaced by the following text: "*Noting also* the development of the vulnerability index in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/183 of 16 December 1996, and stressing that the Committee on Development Planning should take fully into account this index in evaluating the status of the least developed countries,". He expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt the revised draft resolution by consensus.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation *(continued)*

(f) First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty *(continued)*

Draft resolution on the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/C.2/52/L.30)

2. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.30 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

(h) Human resources development *(continued)*

Draft resolution on developing human resources for development (A/C.2/52/L.31)

3. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.31 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development *(continued)*

(g) Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 *(continued)*

Draft resolution on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly on environment and development (A/C.2/52/L.29)

4. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.29 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 100: Training and research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research *(continued)*

Draft resolution on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/C.2/52/L.32)

5. **Mr. Selenov** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the word "Member" in the fifth preambular paragraph, as well as in paragraphs 1 and 4 (a) of the draft resolution, should be deleted.

6. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.32 and said that other delegations had also become sponsors of the draft. An effort had been made to include in the draft resolution all those elements of the reports submitted under the item "training and research" which might contribute to reforming the functioning of UNITAR. The draft resolution welcomed, in particular, the successful restructuring of the Institute; renewed its appeal to all Governments and to private institutions to give financial support to the Institute; appealed for an effective division of labour among United Nations training institutions in order to avoid duplication of functions and to ensure an efficient use of resources; welcomed the initiative of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director to explore the possibility of the Institute becoming an executing agent of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General was also called upon to explore ways and means to provide additional facilities to the Institute for conducting programmes and training courses that were provided at no cost to States.

7. In view of the importance of assigning well-defined responsibilities to the various training and research institutes of the United Nations, the sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Other matters

8. **The Chairman** informed members of the Committee that he had received a letter from the President of the General Assembly requesting him to conduct, on the President's behalf as a matter of priority, consultations with

Member States on the date, modalities and focus of the first high-level dialogue for a period of two days to be held by the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 51/174; such dialogue should focus on the economic and social impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications. He suggested that the initial consultations on that issue should be held on the afternoon of the following day, before the consultations on the draft resolutions submitted.

9. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/52/SR.44

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

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Second Committee

Summary record of the 44 meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 November 1997, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(f) First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

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97-82940 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(f) First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

Draft resolution on the role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty (A/C.2/52/L.27)

1. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) introduced the draft resolution entitled "Role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty" on behalf of the sponsors, Bangladesh, Cape Verde and Peru. He added that Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Samoa, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Uganda and the United States of America had joined the sponsors.

2. The draft resolution basically focused on the role that microcredit could play in the eradication of poverty. The preamble stated that microcredit programmes had especially benefited women, and by providing access to small capital loans to people living in poverty, had succeeded in generating productive self-employment. In the operative part, the General Assembly welcomed the outcome of the Microcredit Summit, held at Washington, D.C. in February 1997 with the participation of many United Nations agencies and the World Bank, and took note of its Declaration and Plan of Action and of the communiqué issued by the Council of Heads of State and Government at the Summit and of messages to the Summit from the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It encouraged those involved in poverty eradication programmes to consider incorporating microcredit schemes in their strategies and to adopt policies that supported the development of microcredit institutions, and it called on the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as international and regional financial institutions, and donor agencies involved in the eradication of poverty, to explore including the microcredit approach in their programmes. It further called on all concerned non-governmental organizations, other actors of civil society and the private sector to support and incorporate, as appropriate, microcredit schemes in their programmes for the eradication of poverty.

3. Given the benefit which could be derived from the idea and objective of the draft resolution, he hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/52/SR.45

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
17 February 1998
English
Original: French

Second Committee

Summary record of the 45th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 1 December 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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Statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations

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97-83345 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

1. The Chairman, after welcoming the Secretary-General, and thanking him for taking the time to address the Committee, briefly recalled the background to the Agenda for Development, saying that it was time, now that the substance had been defined, to proceed to the implementation phase. The relationship between that initiative and the reform of the Organization was clear. For that reason, international economic cooperation featured prominently among the various reforms which the Secretary-General had proposed and it was no accident that the subject had been discussed at length, in the meetings of the Second Committee, by the heads of the Executive Committees established to deal with development and other matters. The statement which the Secretary-General was about to make would be the culmination of that new process.

Statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations

2. **The Secretary-General** recalled that after a protracted and sometimes frustrating negotiation process the Agenda for Development had been adopted almost *sotto voce*; its adoption (A/RES/51/240) was, nonetheless, a very significant accomplishment. Politically it meant that all groups of countries, notwithstanding their differences, were united in wishing to provide the international community with a common framework that would serve to reaffirm the centrality of development and to guide a renewed effort to spread and share the benefits of development. Substantively the adoption of the Agenda reflected an emerging consensus on what constituted development in the new international environment. It confirmed that international development was based on solidarity and partnership rather than on competing interests and that, while individual countries were ultimately responsible for their own development, their efforts could only succeed within a multilateral framework that spread the benefits of globalization as widely as possible while minimizing its risks and costs.

3. The Agenda was notable for its unprecedented scope and high complexity. The policies and measures it embodied covered the whole spectrum of economic and social development and provided a link between humanitarian interventions and development. The Agenda was also rooted in a recognition that development required a comprehensive and integrated approach. After all what would be the significance of economic growth if it benefited only the rich? What would be the point of international development cooperation in the face of increasing barriers to trade and declining commodity prices? The Agenda encompassed policies and measures for action by Governments and by the international community, including the United Nations system, thereby highlighting the interactions between national policies and the international environment most conducive to growth and sustainable development.

4. Those characteristics also defined the three main challenges that would have to be faced in order to implement the Agenda. First, it would be necessary to reconcile priority-setting with the need to pursue simultaneous actions on several fronts. At the national level, while it was the prerogative of each country to set its own priorities and to choose its own path to development, that must be done taking fully into account the internal and external forces that impacted on such priorities and that were critical to their success and with a sense of responsibility as to the effects of such choices on the international environment since, in a globalizing world, one country's choices affected the destinies of all. At the level of the United Nations system, facing the challenge implied a new approach to inter-agency coordination, one that placed a premium on a more clear-cut division of labour. That improved distribution of responsibilities must, in turn, stem from a common strategy and a clear perception of common challenges requiring mutually reinforcing interventions and concerted programming.

5. The second challenge was one of political will in sustaining the principles of partnership and solidarity. It was becoming increasingly clear that the future well-being of humankind would depend on the courage of its leaders and their ability to grasp the full meaning of interdependence and to translate it into practical actions. Solidarity remained a crucial pillar of international cooperation. It was therefore necessary to strengthen its economic and its moral underpinning by forging new alliances in the context of expanding markets, while at the same time creating hope and opportunity for the millions of people who were as yet excluded from the global economy. To that end it would be necessary to reverse the decline in official development assistance and to explore new ways of financing development. At the same time the Agenda for Development served as a reminder that no one could afford to stand still. Global forces continued to impact humankind and institutions, redefining the framework for international cooperation and bringing positive as well as negative consequences on a scale never before experienced. The boons of expanded trade and investment and of higher standards of living for millions of people contrasted with the ills of widening income gaps, environmental degradation and illegal drug trafficking.

6. The international community's ability to muster the political will to respond to those challenges would have a decisive impact on the implementation of the Agenda. It would have to establish effective supportive frameworks so as to spread the benefits of globalization more widely, while at the same time avoiding backlashes. Conscious of his responsibility, as Secretary-General, to suggest ways of addressing the complexities inherent in development and sustaining international solidarity in the implementation of the Agenda, he said that he would spare no effort to mobilize Governments, the business sector and civil society. Above all – and that brought him to the third challenge – he would endeavour to reform the Organization and the entire United Nations system.

7. Reform must be based on a clear-headed process of assessing the patterns of change that affected the environment in which the United Nations operated, defining institutional strengths and building on them, and refining roles and refocusing activities around key priorities, with the promotion of development foremost among them. The challenges facing the Organization and the system in implementing the Agenda for Development were indeed the same as those outlined in the reform programme. The objectives of unity of purpose, coherence of efforts and agility set out in the reform programme were also the prerequisites for equipping the Organization to respond effectively to the demands of the Agenda for Development. Among the main institutional strengths of the United Nations were of course its universal character and comprehensive mandate, which made it a unique and indispensable forum and gave it a normative capacity which, in the development sphere, assisted directly in the implementation of national policies and was further supported by the operational capacities of its funds and programmes. Most of the proposals embodied in the reform programme were directly related to the Organization's capacity to respond effectively to the requirements of the Agenda for Development.

8. The General Assembly had a crucial role to play in that regard. The reform programmes relating to it were relevant to enhancing its capacity to steer the actions of Governments and of the United Nations system towards a more effective implementation of the Agenda for Development. The reform proposals aimed at refocusing the work of the Assembly on the priority issues and incorporating in its methods of work the principal features of recent United Nations conferences. The Assembly should examine as a matter of priority the issue of "international financing for development", which went to the core of the Agenda for Development. The Second Committee had already put forward its own proposals regarding the renewal of dialogue on strengthening international cooperation for development based on partnership, which was one of the principal vehicles for implementing the Agenda for Development.

9. The proposed new management structure was based on the concept of a single secretariat which would encompass secretariat departments as well as the secretariats of the programmes and funds. Out of the four sectoral executive committees, two were devoted to economic and social affairs and development cooperation, and were thus geared to guiding the Organization's response to the requirements of the Agenda. The functions envisaged for the proposed new post of Deputy Secretary-General and the establishment of a strategic planning unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General were also highly relevant. The consolidation of different secretariat entities in the economic and social field into a single Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the establishment of a substantive secretariat of the Economic and Social Council and a better division of labour between UNCTAD and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should all enable the Organization to act more effectively in support of macroeconomic coordination and development. Review of the respective roles of the new department and of UNCTAD in the macroeconomic area led to the conclusion that beginning in January 1999 the world's economic situation and prospects should be dealt with in a single United Nations report on that subject, which would be produced jointly by the services of the Organization in New York and Geneva. The new department and UNCTAD would seek to spread the benefits of globalization; their action would be supplemented by a strengthening of the United Nations Office in Vienna, whose function was to combat the negative effects of globalization, such as drug trafficking and transnational crime. The Organization was also seeking to increase its capacity to help redress environmental degradation and support sustainability in relation to both the natural environment and human settlements.

10. Certainly, the success of the Agenda for Development would depend on tangible implementation of the intergovernmental agreements in the field. The establishment of the United Nations Development Group and the principle of a single United Nations Development Assistance Framework should contribute to bringing different activities at the field level into a coherent and dynamic whole. The decisions taken to consolidate the work of all funds and programmes under the supervision of the Resident Coordinator and to establish common premises of the United Nations were in keeping with the principle of sharing administrative systems and services at the country level. Furthermore, the recommendation on the establishment of

an Office for Development Financing should contribute to the substantial increase in resources for operational activities called for by the Agenda for Development. The "development dividend" was also geared to strengthening the Organization's capacity for direct support to countries in their development efforts. With regard to the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery, he had made recommendations which he hoped would assist member States continue the review of their functioning they had undertaken. For example, the Economic and Social Council should fully exercise its role as the overall coordinating body of all United Nations development funds and programmes. Civil society had an important contribution to make to the implementation of the Agenda for Development. The Second Committee, like the Economic and Social Council, should continue to engage civil society in intergovernmental deliberations.

11. The reform processes under way in the various organizations of the system needed to be concerted, so that the new orientations and structures that were emerging from them were mutually reinforcing and also strengthened the overall capacity of the system to implement the Agenda for Development coherently. The idea of establishing a high-level commission to review the constitutional instruments of the specialized agencies and prepare for the Millennium Assembly was informed by the same objectives. Cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions was an important part of efforts to enhance the system's efforts to implement the Agenda for Development. That Agenda had been adopted by the General Assembly less than six months ago. Its implementation had just begun, and would require strenuous efforts, above all in three directions: dealing effectively with the scope and complexity of development problems, demonstrating political will and carrying out the necessary reforms.

12. What was needed now was to decide on the reform proposals he had put forward.

13. **The Chairman** thanked the Secretary-General.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.